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BAHRAIN-CHINA: Establishing Relations

The establishment of formal relations between Bahrain and China yesterday will facilitate military and economic cooperation, but Manama is in no hurry to develop close ties to Beijing.

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During the past year, several Chinese political and economic delegations visited Bahrain, the final Arabian Peninsula state other than Saudi Arabia to establish diplomatic ties to China.

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Relations between Manama and Beijing will probably remain limited, since their mutual interests are few. Bahrain probably believes it will gain the appearance of a more balanced foreign policy as well as access to an alternative arms and trade market. China may believe it can draw Bahrain into a larger relationship, particularly by offering relatively inexpensive military equipment. But Bahrain's suspicion of Chinese political motives, determination to preserve US-Bahraini security cooperation, and lucrative trade relations with Taiwan will hamper the Chinese effort.

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~~Top Secret~~

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